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NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

WHAT IS BACK OF THE WAR. By Albert J. Beveridge. Indianapolis; The Bobbs-Merrill Company.

If any book about the Great War may be said to make thoroughly enjoyable reading, this description is applicable to Senator Beveridge's account of his experiences and observations on two of the fighting fronts and in three of the warring countries during the Winter and Spring just past. The author talked with the common soldiers and officers in the trenches; he interviewed prisoners in the German camps, interned Belgian soldiers in Holland, French peasants living in the territory subject to German military rule. In addition, he had frank conversations with many notable men representing various vocations and viewpoints, in Germany, in France, and in England.

It is not the tragic and horrifying reaction—or afterthought—of battle that Senator Beveridge makes us feel. He brings us probably much closer to the reality by revealing the matter-of-fact, cheerful side of the deadly struggle—the good physical condition of the men rather than “the misery of the trenches,” the everyday gallantry of the combatants, rather than the soul-shaking inferno of shot and shell as it presents itself to the imaginations of the more tender-minded. Told in a style of easy conversational eloquence, his narrative draws one into the spirit of the game, makes one feel the fascination and impressiveness of smoothly working efficiency, the “tang of the unusual and perilous,” the quasi-spiritual exaltation of perfect solidarity and determination—an exaltation that calms and steadies, and that is not incompatible with unheroic comfort and with occasional humor. Even the wounded returning from the front seem less pitiable than imagination paints them. These same wounded, in the hospitals, are usually anxious to return to the firing line; so are the prisoners; so are the soldiers who have been for a day or two off duty. In short, human nature is great enough to support even the horrors of Armageddon without losing its poise or its admirable commonplaceness.

If the book is psychologically true to human nature, it is also obviously truthful and just in the views it gives of the conduct and character of the combatants. We read of the interned Belgian soldiers as being, from the point of view of the hard-headed though not unsympathetic Hollanders, rather an ungrateful and trouble-

some lot—men more concerned about their daily fare and the privileges accorded them than about the fate of their country. We have indisputable testimony to the good relations prevailing between the inhabitants of conquered French territory and the German conquerors, and to the personally friendly sentiments that exist in German prison camps between German captors and captured Frenchmen or Russians. Even the English in these camps say that they have little to complain of.

Objectively, the story is extraordinarily vivid; it is compact and fluent in its marshalling of sharp visual impressions and of glimpses of men in action which convey the stir and tension of the battle-field. Bits of casual but significant conversation alternate with the detonations of shells. The author saw and heard a great deal. He was in the German lines opposed to the French near Lille, and in the lines opposed to the English at Comines on the road to Ypres. In the East he witnessed a part of the "battle of Bohmoff"—a battle as large as many of the biggest conflicts in our Civil War, which was fought some forty miles from Lodz.

Those parts of Senator Beveridge's book in which he sounds the public opinion of Germany, England, and France, are not less interesting than his battle pictures. The author found in Germany an even greater degree of cheerful confidence and determination than Americans have believed to obtain there; in France, an equal determination combined with greater nervous tension; in England, practically unanimous support of the Government, but a rather discouraging diversity of opinion, comparative unconcern, and a somewhat general dubiety as to what the war is all about. More specific views are given in conversational detail. Among the German notables with whom Senator Beveridge talked are the Kaiser, Admiral von Tirpitz, General von Hindenburg, the theologian, von Harnack, and many others. In France he interviewed such men as Gabriel Hanotaux, Hervé, Bergson; besides these, a prominent peace advocate and a leading statesman, whose names are suppressed. In England he conferred with "one of the foremost statesmen," with Lord Bryce, with Lord Newton, described as "a typical conservative British peer," with Charles Trevelyan, "the foe of secret diplomacy," with Sir Gilbert Parker, and with Bernard Shaw. Most interesting is his account of that phase of British opinion which deplores the manner in which the nation was "led blindfold up to the guns," and of that which regards the violation of Belgium's neutrality as a mere side-issue. It may be added that the views of economists and business men in each country are of even more significance than those of statesmen and philosophers.

Senator Beveridge's interviews with all these men of weight and authority are remarkable for dramatic and human interest. The Kaiser, for instance, is described with the view of bringing him familiarly to the understanding of the American mind, and the

sketch of him is "put in terms of Americanism just as if describing an American public man." All the conversations reported have the tone of frankness and the interest of the impromptu spoken word.

To those who love eye-witness and ear-witness reports, *What is Back of the War* will furnish a feast; it is emphatically a book to read if one wishes to get a lively and intelligent impression of the European scene in war time. Perhaps the most interesting chapter, however, is that which is devoted to probabilities. In brief, Senator Beveridge is convinced that the war is everywhere strengthening the forces of democratic collectivism—that its final outcome will be a more or less thorough reorganization of European life upon this basis.

ANIMAL EXPERIMENTATION AND MEDICAL PROGRESS. By William Williams Keen, M.D., LL.D. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914.

The reader who is not an antivivisectionist can scarcely peruse Dr. Keen's succinct and informing account of medical progress during the last five decades without wondering that the author should have been forced into a controversial attitude by the attacks of furious sentimentalists. That there is need of protest, however, against that perversion of humane feeling which would sacrifice the whole to minor parts, is amply attested. Dr. Keen's references to antivivisection documents and his careful analyses of some of them seem to show on the part of certain opponents of animal experimentation a determined, unreasoning hostility which uses logic, rather blindly, as a weapon of offense, but falls back ultimately upon the appeal to feeling. Nothing can justify vivisection—that is the final attitude of one group of extremists. The others are logically constrained either to deny in large part the value of serum-therapy and other results of medical research—most of which have been achieved through animal experimentation—or to propose the shockingly cruel alternative of experiment upon human beings.

Those who deny or minimize the value of modern surgical progress are prone to overlook certain important facts, and, indeed, the ordinary reader, it may be suspected, has but an inadequate notion of the rôle which animal experimentation has played in saving human life. Serum-therapy tells less than half of the story. It is true that the progressive introduction of the antiseptic system was practically "one vast experiment in the human living body." This experiment, as all the world knows, was justified by its results. To us, nowadays, it may seem that Lister in experimenting with antiseptics upon a living human being ran no risk. Every departure, however, from accepted practise is a risk, and had the results been unfavorable the world might well have regretted that Lister was not permitted to try his first experiments in antiseptic surgery upon animals. Later,